

How do I walk it?

As you enter the labyrinth area, look for a triangular white stone. This marks the entrance. There is no right or wrong way to walk the labyrinth. Your attitude can be joyous or somber, reflective or prayerful. Adults are usually quiet, children often talk. You may remove your shoes if you like. Stand at the entrance and quiet your mind and become aware of your breath. When you are ready, begin to walk slowly down the path. Allow yourself to find the pace your body wants to go. Pay attention to your breathing and your walking letting them calm and carry your thoughts. Notice the scenery and sounds around you. You may pause along the way being mindful of leaving space for others to walk past you. You may also pause or sit in the center for prayer. The path is two way. Those going in will meet those coming out. You may "pass" people or let others step around you.

Be still and know that I am God.

Psalm 46:10

General Guidelines

Some general guidelines for walking a labyrinth:

1. Focus: Pause and wait at the entrance. Become quiet and centered. Give acknowledgment through a bow, nod or other gesture and then enter. If someone is in front of you give them several minutes to proceed before you enter.
2. Experience: Walk purposefully. Observe the process. When you reach the center, stay there and focus several moments. Leave when it seems appropriate. Be attentive on the way out.
3. Exit: Turn and face the entrance. Give an acknowledgement of ending, such as "Amen."
4. Reflect: After walking the labyrinth reflect back on your experience. Use journaling or drawing to capture your experience.
5. Walk often.

For information on scheduling a leader or a program around the labyrinth please contact Mary Moomaw, Program Coordinator, 540-856-2141, or mmoomaw@shrinemont.com

Sources of information on the history of labyrinths: www.lessons4living.com; www.gracecathedral.org/labyrinth/; and The Labyrinth in the Woods at St. Mary's Whitechapel.

THE LABYRINTH AT SHRINE MONT: A PLACE FOR REST AND DEVOTION



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Location

The Labyrinth is located about 1,000 feet to the northwest of the Cathedral Shrine. There are two ways to get there. One is to start from the Shrine, and at the goldfish pond, turn right and walk the 1,000 feet and you will see the labyrinth in the woods on your left, opposite the campfire circle. The second is to walk up the road between the Bishop's House (Box Hill) and Stribling Cottage. The labyrinth will be straight ahead opposite the campfire circle. The labyrinth is just off the road to the Cross with the Stations of the Cross.

Facts about Shrine Mont's Labyrinth

Our labyrinth is a seven-circuit labyrinth 45 feet across. It has a cruciform design and is patterned after the labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral in France. It faces north towards the Cross on Spring Mountain and North Mountain beyond. The white stone at the entry, called the Entry Stone, is carved from marble from the sacred Isle of Iona in Scotland. It was constructed by volunteers in March 2009 using native stones.



The Labyrinth and Christianity

The labyrinth became a part of the Christian tradition out of necessity. Early Christians took a vow to visit the Holy City of Jerusalem at some point in their lives. Over the centuries, particularly as Christianity grew in Western Europe, this pledge became increasingly difficult to fulfill. Practices began to emerge which enabled Christians to honor their sacred commitment to pilgrimage. One of these was the labyrinth. They were created on the floors of many European cathedrals to be walked as a substitute for the great pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The most famous and earliest of these is on the floor of the Chartres Cathedral in France (circa 1200). In the late 20th century the labyrinth was rediscovered by Christianity as a tool for spiritual pilgrimage.

What is a labyrinth?

The Labyrinth is an archetype, a divine imprint, found in all religious traditions in various forms. It is a narrow meandering path, with one entrance and a single route that winds in a circular pattern to the center. From the labyrinth's center point the same path will take you out again. A labyrinth is different from a maze in that there are no wrong turns or dead ends.

History of Labyrinths

Labyrinths date back thousands of years and are not limited to any single culture or religious tradition. The earliest examples are more than 3,000 years old. They have been found in many cultures in various designs. Archeology suggests that these designs were often connected with holy places of worship. The winding path of most labyrinths creates a circular pattern. The circle is a universal symbol representing unity, wholeness and infinity.